Plato's *Crito*

[*Or, On What Is to Be Done*][1]

SOCRATES. Why have you arrived at this hour, Crito?[2] Or isn't it still early? 43a

CRITO. It certainly is.

SOCRATES. What is the hour?

CRITO. Just before daybreak.

SOCRATES. I wonder how it is that the guard of the prison was willing to let you in.

CRITO. He is accustomed to me by now, Socrates, because of my frequent visits here; and besides, he has been done a certain benefaction by me.

SOCRATES. Have you just come, or have you been here long?

CRITO. Fairly long.

SOCRATES. Then why didn't you wake me up right away, instead of sitting beside me in silence? b

CRITO. No, by Zeus, Socrates, nor would I myself willingly be in such great sleeplessness and pain! But I have long been wondering at you, perceiving how pleasantly you sleep. And I kept from waking you on purpose, so that you would pass the time as pleasantly as possible. And though I have of course often previously regarded you through your whole life as happy in your temperament, I do so especially in the present calamity now, so easily and mildly do you bear it.

[1] "Or, On What Is to Be Done" may be Plato's subtitle or, more likely, may have been added by a later Greek editor.

[2] On the man Crito, see *Apology* n. 61. The name Crito comes from a Greek word that means "discern" or "judge."

SOCRATES. That's because it would be discordant, Crito, for someone of my age to be vexed if he now must meet his end. 43b

CRITO. Others of your age, Socrates, are also caught in such calamities, but their age does not release them from being vexed at their present fortune. c

SOCRATES. This is so. But why *have* you arrived so early?

CRITO. To bear a message, Socrates, that is hard—not hard for you, as it appears to me, but for me and for all your companions it is a hard and grave one. And I, as it seems to me, would bear it the most gravely of all.

SOCRATES. What is it? Or has the ship arrived from Delos, after whose arrival I must die?[3] d

CRITO. It hasn't arrived yet, but it does seem to me that it will come today, from the report of some men who have come from Sunium and left it there.[4] So it is clear from these messengers that it will come today, and tomorrow it will be necessary, Socrates, for you to end your life.

SOCRATES. Well, may it be with good fortune, Crito; if such is dear to the gods, such let it be. However, I don't suppose it will come today.

CRITO. From what do you infer this? 44a

SOCRATES. I will tell you. Surely I must die on the day after the ship comes.

CRITO. That's at least what those having authority over these things say.

SOCRATES. Then I do not suppose it will come on the day that is upon us, but on the next. I infer it from a certain dream I had a little earlier tonight. And there's probably something opportune in your not having awakened me.

CRITO. But what *was* the dream?

[3]See Plato, *Phaedo* 58a–c: "This is the ship, as the Athenians say, in which Theseus once went to Crete leading the 'twice seven' and saved them and was saved himself. [According to tradition the Athenians had been obliged to send Crete a periodic tribute of seven youths and seven maidens. Theseus, the founder of Athens, went to Crete and, by some accounts, saved himself and the others by defeating the Minotaur.] They made a vow to Apollo then, as is said, that if they were saved, they would send a mission each year to Delos [the Aegean island sacred to Apollo], and because of that they always send it annually to the god and still do now. Now whenever they begin the mission, it is their law to purify the city during this time and to conduct no public executions until the ship arrives at Delos and comes back here again. This occasionally takes a long time, whenever the winds happen to hold them back. The beginning of the mission is whenever the priest of Apollo crowns the stern of the ship. This happened, as I say, on the day before the trial. Because of this Socrates was in jail a long time between his trial and his death."

[4]Sunium is the cape of the Athenian territory of Attica, and a ship returning from Delos would pass by it and might be detained there if the winds were unfavorable.

SOCRATES. It seemed that a certain woman approached me, beautiful and well formed, dressed in white, and that she called me by name and said: "Socrates, on the third day thou would'st arrive in fertile Phthia."[5] 44a b

CRITO. The dream is strange, Socrates.

SOCRATES. No, quite manifest, at least as it seems to me, Crito.

CRITO. Too much so, as is likely. But, daimonic[6] Socrates, even now obey[7] me and save yourself, since if you die, for me it is not just one calamity: apart from being deprived of such a companion[8] as I will never discover again, I will also seem to many, those who don't know you and me plainly, to have been able to save you if I had been willing to spend money, but not to have cared. And yet what reputation would be more shameful than to seem[9] to regard money as more important than friends? For the many will not be persuaded that you yourself were not willing to go away from here although we were eager for it. c

SOCRATES. But why do we care in this way, blessed Crito, about the opinion of the many? For the most decent men, whom it is more worthy to give thought to, will hold that these things have been done in just the way they were done.

CRITO. But surely you see that it is necessary, Socrates, to care also about the opinion of the many. The present situation now d

[5]In the *Iliad* (IX.363) Achilles says to Odysseus, "And if the famous Earth-shaker grants me a good sailing, on the third day I would arrive in fertile Phthia." Achilles is refusing Odysseus' request that he be reconciled with Agamemnon, his ruler. He is threatening to leave the army at Troy and go home to Phthia, an area of Thessaly. But Socrates also dreamed that he was addressed by a beautiful woman, which may be an allusion to a later event in the *Iliad* (XVIII.94ff.): "In a central passage of the *Apology of Socrates* (28c2–d5) where Socrates presents Achilleus as a model of noble conduct, he speaks of a beautiful woman, the goddess Thetis, saying to her son Achilleus that he will die straightway after Hektor; Achilleus chose to die nobly rather than to live in disgrace—which he would surely do by returning to Phthia. In Socrates' dream the two Homeric passages are combined with the result that a beautiful woman prophesies to him that he would come to Phthia, or advises him to go to Phthia, i.e., to Thessaly. . . . But Phthia being Achilleus' fatherland, the dream could as well mean that Socrates will come on the third day to his true fatherland, i.e., to Hades." Quoted from Leo Strauss, "On Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito*," in Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 55. A pun may also be intended: "Phthia" suggests the verb *phthiein*, "waste away, decay, die."

[6]As an address, "daimonic" usually conveys a sense of ironic reproach, meaning something like "you marvellous fellow," "strange sir." On the literal meaning of daimon and the daimonic, see *Apology* n. 37.

[7]Here and throughout, the word "obey" (*peithesthai*) may also mean "be persuaded."

[8]"Companion" is *epitēdeios;* this word which Crito uses for "friend" connotes someone "useful" or "serviceable."

[9]Here and elsewhere, "seem" (*dokein*) may also be translated "be reputed." The word "opinion" (*doxa*) in Socrates' reply is formed from the same root as *dokein*. On *doxa*, see *Apology* n. 29.

makes it clear that the many can produce not the smallest of evils but almost the greatest, if someone is slandered among them. 44d

SOCRATES. Would that the many *could* produce the greatest evils, Crito, so that they could also produce the greatest goods! That would indeed be noble. But as it is, they can do neither. For they aren't capable of making someone either prudent or imprudent,[10] but do whatever they happen to do by chance.

CRITO. Let these things be so. But, Socrates, tell me this. Surely e
you aren't worrying, are you, on behalf of me and the rest of your companions, over the prospect that if you leave here, the informers[11] will make trouble for us on the ground that we stole you away from here, and we will be compelled to lose either our whole substance[12] or a lot of money, or even to suffer something else besides this? If you fear some such thing, leave it aside. For 45a
surely it is just for us to save you and run this risk, and one still greater than this, if need be. But obey me and do not do otherwise.

SOCRATES. I am worrying over the prospect of these things, Crito, and of many others.

CRITO. Then do not fear these things. For in fact it is not even much money that certain people are willing to take to save you and lead you out of here. Furthermore, don't you see how easily these informers are bought, and that they wouldn't need much money? My money is available to you, and is, as I suppose, sufficient. b
Furthermore, even if out of some concern for me you suppose I shouldn't spend mine, these foreigners who are here are ready to spend theirs. And one of them has brought sufficient money for this very thing, Simmias of Thebes; and Cebes[13] is ready too, and very many others.

So as I say, don't hesitate to save yourself because you fear these things, and don't let it be hard for you to accept, as you were saying in the court, because you wouldn't know what to do with yourself[14] if you left. For there are many places where they will c
greet you with affection when you arrive. And if you wish to go to Thessaly, I have guest-friends there who will regard you as impor-

[10]"Prudent or imprudent": see *Apology* n. 33.

[11]"Informers" (*sykophantes*) were private citizens who personally profited from their honest or dishonest prosecutions, especially of the wealthy.

[12]"Substance" is *ousia*, literally "beinghood" or "beingness," but used to refer to a man's monetary estate or "real estate."

[13]Simmias and Cebes from Thebes were companions and admirers of Socrates in Athens at this time; they are Socrates' two leading interlocutors in the *Phaedo*.

[14]Literally, "you wouldn't have [any notion of] whatever you would use yourself [for]."

tant and offer you safety, so that no one throughout Thessaly will 45c
cause you pain.[15]

Besides, Socrates, you seem to me to be attempting a thing that isn't even just: you are betraying yourself, although it is possible to be saved. And you are hastening the coming to pass of the very things concerning yourself which your very enemies would hasten on, and did hasten on in their wish to ruin[16] you. In addition to these things, you seem to me at least to be betraying your own sons, too, whom you will leave and abandon, although it is possi- d
ble for you to nurture and educate them. As far as it lies in you, they will do whatever they happen to do by chance, and chance will bring them, as is likely, just the sorts of things that usually happen to orphans when they are orphaned. Now one either should not have children or should endure the hardship of nurturing and educating them. But you seem to me to be choosing the most easygoing course.

Instead, one should choose just what a good and manly[17] man would choose, particularly if one has claimed to care for virtue through his whole life. For my part I am ashamed for you and for e
us, your companions, that the whole affair concerning you will seem to have been conducted with a certain lack of manliness on our part: the way the lawsuit was introduced into the law court, even though it was possible for it not to be introduced; the way the judicial contest itself took place; and now this, the ridiculous conclusion of the affair, will seem to have escaped us completely because of a certain badness and lack of manliness on our part, since we didn't save you, nor did you save yourself, although it was 46a
possible and feasible if we had been of even a slight benefit. So see to it, Socrates, that these things be not shameful as well as bad both for you and for us.

But take counsel—rather, there is no longer time to take counsel, but to have taken counsel. And there is only one counsel. For all these things must be done during the coming night. If we wait any longer, it will be impossible and can no longer be done. But in every way, Socrates, obey me and in no way do otherwise.

[15]Thessaly is an area of Greece north of Thermopylae, about 100 miles northwest of Athens. Being relatively isolated from the rest of Greece, it was somewhat rude and uncivilized.

[16]*Diaphtheirein* ("ruin") is elsewhere translated as "corrupt," as in the expression, "corrupt the youth."

[17]The word translated "manly" (*andreios*) may also mean "courageous." The word derives from *anēr*, "man" (*Apology* n. 49).

SOCRATES. Dear Crito, your eagerness is worth much if some correctness be with it. If not, the greater it is, the harder it is to deal with. So we should consider whether these things are to be done or not, since I, not only now but always, am such as to obey nothing else of what is mine than that argument which appears best to me upon reasoning. The arguments that I spoke in the past I am not able to throw out now that this fortune has come to pass for me. Instead, they appear rather alike to me, and I venerate and honor the same ones I did before. If we have no better argument to say at present, know well that I will certainly not yield to you, not even if the power of the many scares us like children with more hobgoblins than those now present, sending against us imprisonments and executions and confiscations of money. 46b c

How then would we consider this with all due measure? By taking up first this argument you are making about opinions. Was it said nobly on each occasion or not, that one should pay mind to some opinions, but not others? Or was it said nobly before I had to die, while now it has become very clear that it was said pointlessly just for the sake of argument, and that in truth it was child's play and drivel? I desire to consider in common with you, Crito, whether the argument appears at all different to me, now that I am in this position, or the same; and whether we shall leave it aside or obey it. d

On each occasion, as I suppose, those who supposed that they had something to say somehow used to speak as I was speaking just now: of the opinions which human beings opine, some must be regarded as important, others not. Before the gods, Crito, does this not seem to you to be nobly spoken? For you, humanly speaking, are not about to die tomorrow, and the present calamity wouldn't lead you astray. Consider, then. Doesn't it seem to you adequately spoken, that one should not honor all the opinions of human beings, but some and not others? What do you say? Isn't this nobly spoken? e 47a

CRITO. Nobly.[18]

SOCRATES. To honor the upright opinions, but not the villainous?

CRITO. Yes.

SOCRATES. Aren't the upright ones those of the prudent, and the villainous ones those of the imprudent?

CRITO. Of course.

[18]*Kalon* is translated "noble" or "beautiful" throughout the *Crito*. When *kalon* is applied to speech, as here, it may mean merely "well" spoken, or it may have the stronger sense of "honorably." See *Apology* n. 16 on *kalon*.

SOCRATES. Come then, again, how were such things spoken of? 47a
Does a man who is exercising and practicing gymnastics pay mind b
to the praise and blame and opinion of every man, or of one only, who happens to be a doctor or trainer?

CRITO. Of one only.

SOCRATES. Therefore he should fear the blame and welcome the praises of the one, but not those of the many.

CRITO. Clearly.

SOCRATES. He is to practice and exercise, then, and to eat and drink as seems fitting to the one—the overseer and expert—rather than to all the others.

CRITO. This is so.

SOCRATES. Well, then. If he disobeys the one and dishonors his c
opinion and praises, while honoring those of the many who have no expertise, won't he suffer evil?

CRITO. Of course.

SOCRATES. What is this evil? And where and at what does it aim among the things belonging to him who disobeys?

CRITO. Clearly at his body, for this is what it destroys.

SOCRATES. Nobly spoken. Aren't the other things also like this (so that we don't have to go through all of them)? And in particular, concerning the just and unjust and shameful and noble and good and bad things, about which we are now taking counsel, must we follow the opinion of the many and fear it rather than that d
of the one—if there is such an expert—whom we must be ashamed before and fear more than all the others? And if we don't follow him, we will corrupt and maim that thing which, as we used to say, becomes better by the just and is destroyed by the unjust.[19] Or isn't there anything to this?

CRITO. I, at least, suppose that there is, Socrates.

SOCRATES. Come then, if we destroy that which becomes better by the healthful and is corrupted by the diseaseful, because we don't obey the opinion of the experts, is life worth living for us when it has been corrupted? Surely this is the body, isn't it? e

CRITO. Yes.

SOCRATES. So is life worth living for us with a wretched and corrupted body?

CRITO. In no way.

[19]Words exactly corresponding to "as we used to say" are not in the Greek, but they are implied by Socrates' use of the imperfect tense (literally, "used to become better by the just and used to be destroyed by the unjust").

SOCRATES. But is life worth living for us with that thing corrupted 47e
which the unjust maims and the just profits? Or do we hold that thing to be more paltry than the body—whatever it is of the things that belong to us which both injustice and justice concern? 48a

CRITO. In no way.

SOCRATES. But more honorable?

CRITO. Much more so.

SOCRATES. Then we ought not at all, O best of men, to give so much thought to what the many will say of us, but rather to what the expert concerning the just and unjust things—to what the one, and truth itself—will say. So first, it's not correct for you to introduce the claim that we must give thought to the opinion of the many concerning things just and noble and good and their opposites.

"But the fact is," someone might say, "the many are able to kill us."

CRITO. Yes, clearly this is so. For it might be said, Socrates. What b
you say is true.

SOCRATES. But, you wondrous man, the argument that we have gone through still seems to me, at least, like it did before. Consider, again, whether the following also still stays so for us or not: not living, but living well, is to be regarded as most important.

CRITO. It does stay so.

SOCRATES. And that living well and nobly and justly are the same. Does it stay so or does it not stay?

CRITO. It stays so.

SOCRATES. Therefore from the things agreed upon, it must be considered whether it is just for me to try to go out of here although the Athenians are not permitting me to go, or not just. And c
if it appears just, let us try, but if not, let's leave it aside. As for the considerations that you speak of concerning spending of money and reputation and nurture of children, I suspect that in truth, Crito, these are considerations of those who easily kill and, if they could, would bring back to life again, acting mindlessly: namely, the many. Since this is how the argument holds, nothing else is to be considered by us except what we were saying just now: whether we will do just things by paying money and gratitude to those who will lead me out of here, or whether in truth we will do injustice by d
doing all these things—those of us who are leading out as well as those of us who are being led out. And if it is apparent that these deeds of ours are unjust, we must take nothing into account com-

pared to the doing of injustice, even if we must die by staying here and keeping quiet or must suffer anything else whatever. 48d

CRITO. You seem to me to speak nobly, Socrates; but see what we are to do.

SOCRATES. Let us consider in common, my good man, and if there is some way you can contradict my argument, contradict it e and I will obey you. But if not, blessed man, then stop telling me the same argument again and again, that I ought to go away from here although the Athenians are unwilling. For I regard it as important to act after persuading you, not while you are unwilling. Now see if this beginning of the consideration is stated adequately for you, and try to answer what is asked in whatever way you most 49a suppose it to be.

CRITO. I will try.

SOCRATES. Do we assert that in no way ought injustice to be done voluntarily, or that in one way injustice ought to be done, but in another way not? Or is doing injustice in no way good or noble, as we have often agreed in the past, and which was also said just now? Or have all those former agreements of ours been poured away in these few days? And although at our age, Crito, we old men have long been seriously conversing with each other, were we unaware, then, that we ourselves are no different from children? b Or is it so for us now more than ever just as it was spoken then? Whether the many say so or not, and whether we must suffer things still harder than these or maybe milder, does doing injustice nevertheless happen to be bad and shameful in every way for the one who does injustice? Do we affirm it or not?

CRITO. We affirm it.

SOCRATES. Then one must in no way do injustice.

CRITO. Of course not.

SOCRATES. And even he who has been done injustice, then, must not do injustice in return, as the many suppose, since one must in no way do injustice.

CRITO. Apparently not. c

SOCRATES. What then? Should one do evil or not, Crito?

CRITO. Doubtless one must not, Socrates.

SOCRATES. What then? Is it just or not just for the one to whom evil is done to do evil in return, as the many say?

CRITO. In no way.

SOCRATES. For surely there is no difference between human beings doing evil and doing injustice.

CRITO. What you say is true. 49c

SOCRATES. Then no human being should do injustice in return or do evil, whatever he suffers from others. And see to it, Crito, that by agreeing to this, you aren't agreeing contrary to your opinion. d For I know that this seems and will seem so only to a certain few. So there is no common counsel for those who hold this opinion and those who do not: it is necessary that they will have contempt for each other when they see each others' counsels. So you too consider very well whether you share this opinion in common with me and whether we should begin taking counsel from here: that it is never correct to do injustice, or to do injustice in return, or for someone to whom evil is done to defend himself by doing evil in return. Or do you stand aloof and not share this beginning? For to me it has long seemed so and still does now, but if it has seemed e some other way to you, speak and teach me. But if you abide by the things from before, hear what comes after this.

CRITO. I do abide by them and it does seem so to me as well. But speak.

SOCRATES. Again, I'll say what comes after this, or rather ask. Ought someone to do the things he agrees upon with someone—if they are just—or ought he to evade them by deception?

CRITO. He ought to do them.

SOCRATES. Observe what follows from these things. If we go away from here without persuading the city, do we do evil to 50a some—indeed to those whom it should least be done to—or not? And do we abide by the things we agreed to—if they are just—or not?

CRITO. I have no answer to what you ask, Socrates. For I don't understand.

SOCRATES. Consider it as follows. What if the laws and the community of the city should come and stand before[20] us who are about to run away (or whatever name we should give it) from here and ask: "Tell me, Socrates, what do you have in mind to do? By this deed that you are attempting, what do you think you're doing, b if not destroying us laws and the whole city, as far as it lies in you? Or does it seem possible to you for a city to continue to exist, and not to be overturned, in which the judgments[21] that are reached have no strength, but are rendered ineffective and are corrupted by private men?"

[20]Dreams were frequently said to "stand before" (*epistēnai*) the person dreaming.

[21]The words "judgments" and "trials" in this speech render the Greek *dikai*, the plural of *dikē*, "justice." See also *Apology* n. 73 on *dikē*.

What shall we say, Crito, to these and other such things? For someone, especially an orator, would have many things to say on behalf of this law if it were destroyed—the law that orders that the judgments reached in trials be authoritative. Or shall we tell them, "The city was doing us injustice and did not pass judgment correctly"? Shall we say this, or what? 50b c

CRITO. Yes, this, by Zeus, Socrates!

SOCRATES. Then what if the laws should say, "Socrates, has it been agreed to by us and by you to do this, or to abide by whatever judgments the city reaches in trials?"

If, then, we should wonder at their saying this, perhaps they would say, "Socrates, do not wonder at what is said, but answer, since you have been accustomed to make use of questioning and answering. Come now, what charge are you bringing against us and the city that you are attempting to destroy us? First, didn't we beget you, and didn't your father take your mother and bring you forth through us? Tell us, then, do you in some way blame those of us laws that concern marriages, for not being noble?" d

"I do not blame them," I would say.

"What about those that concern the nurture and education (in which you too were educated) of the one born? Or didn't those laws among us which have been ordered for this end order your father nobly when they passed along the command to him to educate you in music and gymnastic?"[22] e

"Nobly," I would say.

"Well, then. Since you were born and nurtured, and educated, too, could you say, first, that you are not ours, both our offspring and slave, you yourself as well as your forebears? And if this is so, do you suppose that justice is equal for you and for us? And do you suppose that it is just for you to do in return whatever we attempt to do to you? Now with regard to your father (or a master, if you happened to have one), justice was not equal for you, so that you didn't also do in return whatever you suffered: you didn't contradict him when he spoke badly of you, nor did you beat him in return when you were beaten, or do any other such thing. So is it then permitted to you to do so with regard to the fatherland and the laws, so that if we, believing it to be just, attempt to destroy you, then you too, to the extent that you can, will attempt to 51a

[22] "Music and gymnastic" are the elements of the education of a free man. For the Greeks "music" (*mousikē*, that which concerns the Muses) meant especially poetry. Compare *Republic* Books II–III and VI–VII.

destroy us laws and the fatherland in return? And will you say that 51a
in doing this you are acting justly, you who in truth care for virtue?
Or are you so wise that you have been unaware that fatherland is
something more honorable than mother and father and all the
other forebears, and more venerable, and more holy, and more
highly esteemed among gods and among human beings who are b
intelligent? And that you must revere and give way to and fawn
upon a fatherland more than a father when it is angry with you,
and either persuade it or do whatever it bids, and keep quiet and
suffer if it orders you to suffer anything, whether to be beaten or to
be bound? Or that if it leads you into war to be wounded or killed,
this must be done? And that this is just and that you are not to give
way or retreat or leave your station, but that in war and in court
and everywhere, you must do whatever the city and fatherland
bid, or else persuade it what the just is by nature?[23] And that it is
not pious to do violence to mother or father, and still less by far to
the fatherland than to them?"

What shall we say in reply to these things, Crito? That what the laws say is true or not?

CRITO. It seems so to me, at least.

SOCRATES. "Then consider, Socrates," the laws would perhaps say, "that if what we say is true, the things you are attempting to do to us are not just. For although we begat, nourished, and educated you, and gave you and all the other citizens a share in all the d
noble things we could, nevertheless we proclaim, by making it
possible for any Athenian who wishes, once he has been admitted
to adulthood and has seen the affairs in the city and us laws, that if
we do not satisfy him, he is allowed to take his own things and go
away wherever he wishes. And none of us laws is an obstacle or
forbids anyone from going wherever he wishes, keeping his own
things, whether one of you wishes to go to a colony (if we and the
city are not satisfactory) or to go and settle in another home some- e
where. But to whoever of you stays here and sees the way that we
reach judgments and otherwise manage the city, we say that he
has already agreed with us in deed to do whatever we bid. And
when he does not obey, we say that he does injustice in three
ways: in that he does not obey us who begat him; nor us who
nurtured him; and in that although he agreed to obey us, he nei-
ther obeys nor persuades us if we do something ignobly, although
we put forward an alternative to him and do not order him crudely 52a

[23]"Is by nature" translates *pephyka*, the perfect tense of *phyein*, "to grow."

to do whatever we bid, but permit either of two things—either to 52a
persuade us or to do it—but he does neither of these.

"To these charges, Socrates, we say that you too will be liable if you do what you have in mind, and you not least of the Athenians, but more than anyone among them."

If then I should say, "Because of what?" perhaps they would accost me justly and say that more than anyone among the Athenians I happen to have agreed to this agreement. They would say, "Socrates, we have great proofs that both we and the city were b
satisfactory to you. For you would never have exceeded all the other Athenians in staying at home in it unless it had satisfied you exceedingly. You never went out of the city to see the sights except once to the Isthmus, nor did you ever go anywhere else except when you were with the army on campaign somewhere.[24] Nor did you ever make any other journey, as other human beings do, nor did a desire ever take hold of you to know another city or other laws: we and our city were sufficient for you. So vehemently were c
you choosing us and agreeing to be governed in accordance with us that among other things you also had children in it, as though the city was satisfactory to you. Furthermore, in the trial itself you could have proposed exile as your penalty if you had wished, and what you are attempting now when the city is unwilling, you could have done then when it was willing. But you were then pluming yourself on not being vexed if you should have to die, and you chose death, as you said, before exile; while now you are not ashamed of those speeches, nor do you heed us laws, since you are attempting to corrupt us. And you are doing just what the paltriest d
slave would do: attempting to run away contrary to the contracts and agreements according to which you contracted with us to be governed.

"So first, answer us this very thing: whether what we say is true or not true when we claim that you have agreed in deed, but not in speech, to be governed in accordance with us?"

What are we to say in reply to this Crito? Shall we not agree?

CRITO. Necessarily, Socrates.

SOCRATES. "So are you not transgressing," they would say, "your contracts and agreements with us, although you did not e

[24] "To see the sights" translates *epi theorian*, literally, "for contemplation." A *theoria* may also be a religious or other festival, and the reference to "the Isthmus" is probably to the Isthmian games, athletic contests held periodically at Corinth. (The phrase "except once to the Isthmus" is missing from some manuscripts, and it may be an interpolation.) Socrates' military campaigns are mentioned in *Apology* 28e.

agree to them under necessity and were not deceived? Nor were 52e
you compelled to take counsel in a short time, but during seventy years in which you could have gone away if we were not satisfactory or if the agreements did not appear to be just to you. But you chose instead neither Lacedaemon nor Crete—and you yourself on occasion say that *they* have good laws[25]—nor any other of the Greek cities or the barbarian ones. Rather, you took fewer journeys 53a
away from the city than the lame and blind and the other cripples, so exceedingly did it and we laws satisfy you more than the other Athenians, clearly. For whom would a city satisfy without laws? But will you in fact not abide now by what you have agreed to? You will, if you obey us, Socrates; and you will not become ridiculous by going out from the city.

"For consider, if you transgress these things and commit any of these wrongs, what good will you produce for yourself or your own companions? For it is rather clear that your companions will b
themselves risk being exiled and being deprived of their city or losing their substance. And as for yourself, first, if you go to one of the nearest cities, to Thebes or Megara[26] (for both have good laws), you will come as an enemy, Socrates, to their political regime, and those very ones among them who are concerned for their own cities will look askance at you, believing that you are a corrupter of the laws. And you will confirm the judges in their opinion, so that they will seem to have judged the lawsuit correctly. For whoever is c
a corrupter of laws would surely seem very much to be a corrupter of young and mindless human beings. So will you flee the cities with good laws and the most decorous men? And if you do this, will life be worth living for you? Or will you consort with these men and shamelessly converse with them? With what speeches, Socrates? The ones that you speak here, that virtue and justice are of the most worth to human beings, and customs and laws? And do you not suppose the affair of Socrates[27] will appear unseemly? d
One must suppose so.

[25]In *Republic* Book VIII Socrates calls the Spartan and Cretan political order "timocracy," and he appears to rank this order as the best of the political regimes not ruled by philosophers (544c, 547b–548d). Aristotle describes Sparta and Crete in detail in his *Politics* Book II. *Eunomeisthai*, here translated "have good laws," could also mean "are law abiding."

[26]Thebes and Megara, which had been enemies of Athens during the Peloponnesian War, apparently were governed at the time of Socrates' incarceration by narrowly oligarchical constitutions; the regime at Thebes was overthrown with great popular rejoicing several years later.

[27]"The affair (*pragma*) of Socrates"; compare *Apology* 20c and n. 25.

"But will you depart from these places and come to the guest- 53d
friends of Crito in Thessaly? There, of course, is very much disorder and lack of restraint, and perhaps they would be pleased to hear from you how laughably you ran away from the prison by covering yourself with some disguise—putting on either a leather skin or other disguises such as those who run away usually use—and by altering your own figure. Is there no one who will say that you, an old man with only a little time left in his life, as is likely, dared so greedily to desire to live by transgressing the greatest e
laws? Perhaps not, if you don't cause pain to anyone. Otherwise, Socrates, you will hear many things unworthy of yourself. You will live by fawning upon all human beings and being their slave. And what else will you be doing but feasting well in Thessaly, as though you had journeyed to Thessaly for dinner? Where will those speeches concerning justice and the rest of virtue be for us 54a
then?

"Is it rather that you wish to live for your children's sake, so that you may nurture and educate them? What then? Will you take them to Thessaly to nurture and educate them, making them foreigners, so that they will have this advantage too? Or if not this, if they are nurtured here, will they be better nurtured and educated because you are alive when you won't be with them? No, for your companions will take care of them for you. Will they take care of them if you journey to Thessaly but not take care of them if you journey to Hades? If in fact those who claim to you to be your companions are of any benefit at all, one must suppose, at least, b
that they will.

"But, Socrates, obey us, your nurturers, and do not regard children or living or anything else as more important than justice, so that when you go to Hades you will have all these things to say in your defense before those who rule there. For if you do these things, it does not appear to be better or more just or more pious here, either for you or for anyone else of those who are yours, nor will it be better for you when you arrive there. If you depart[28] now, you will depart having been done injustice not by us laws, but by c
human beings. But if you go away so shamefully doing injustice in return and doing evil in return, transgressing your own agreements and contracts with us and doing evil deeds to those to

[28]"If you depart": that is, to Hades. In the next sentence, "But if you go away" means into exile.

whom they should least be done—yourself and friends and father- 54c
land and us—then we will be angry with you while you live, and
our brothers, the laws in Hades, will not receive you favorably
there, knowing that you even attempted to destroy us as far as it
lay in you. But let not Crito persuade you to do what he says rather d
than what we say."

Know well, my dear comrade Crito, that these things are what *I* seem to hear, just as the Corybantes seem to hear the flutes,[29] and this echo of these speeches is booming within me and makes me unable to hear the others. Know that insofar as these things seem so to me now, if you speak against them, you will speak in vain. Nevertheless, if you suppose that you will accomplish anything, speak.

CRITO. But, Socrates, I have nothing to say.

SOCRATES. Then let it go, Crito, and let us act in this way, since in e
this way the god is leading.

[29]In connection with worship of the goddess Cybele a rite was developed to cure nervousness and hysteria by means of dancing to frenzied music played on the flute and kettledrum. Participants in this psychiatric exercise were called Corybantes. The present passage suggests that the music echoes, probably with a calming effect, in the memory of those who have undergone the cure.